



Hidden Olympic Village

Director: Simon Wheatley
UK 2010
11 mins

Bullet Boy

Director: Saul Dibb
©/Presented by: BBC Films, UK Film Council
Production Company: Shine Productions
Produced in association with: BBC Films
Made with the support of:
The National Lottery through UK Film Council,
UK Film Council New Cinema Fund
Presented in Association with:
Portman Productions
Executive Producers: David M. Thompson,
Paul Trijbits, Paul Hamann
Produced by: Marc Boothe, Ruth Caleb
Co-producer: Michael Tait
Associate Producer: Abi Bach
Senior Production Executive for UK Film Council:
Emma Clarke
Director of Production for Shine Ltd: Joe McLusky
Executive Producer for Portman Film:
Tristan Whalley
Production Accountant: George Wong
Production Co-ordinator: Scott James Bassett
Unit Manager: Michael Myrie
Location Managers: Emma Plimmer, Ian Aegis
Post-production Supervisor: Jay Coquillon
1st Assistant Directors: Dominic Fysh,
Tim Riddington, Geoff Dibben
2nd Assistant Directors: Lou Clouter, Rosie Newall
Casting: Des Hamilton
Screenplay: Saul Dibb, Catherine R. Johnson
Director of Photography: Marcel Zyskind
Additional Photography: Graham Smith
Gaffer: Mark Clayton
Stills Photographer: Kerry Brown
Editors: Masahiro Hirakubo, John Mister
Production Designer: Melanie Allen
Art Director: James Price
Additional Art Director: Heather Gibson
Standby Props: Toby Riches
Additional Props: Barry DuPille
Costume Designer: James Keast
Costume Supervisor: Fola Solanke
Make-up Designer: Sam Headley
Make-up Artist: Andre Hudson
Hair: Christina Devi
Laboratory: Soho Images
Original Music: Neil Davidge, Robert del Naja
Original Music (Violins): Louise Jeffery
Original Music Performed by: The Tuff Singers
Music Supervisor: Sophie Sheen
Original Music Mixed by: Lee Shephard
Music Consultant: Charlie Dark
Sound Recordist: Albert Bailey
Boom Operator: Colin Codner
Supervising Sound Editor: Paul Davies
Sound Effects Editor: Christian Koefoed
Consultant Psychiatrist: Dr Trevor Turner
Armourer: Ian Mutch
B3 Projects Publicity: Uju Asika
McDonald & Rutter Publicity: Charles McDonald
UK Film Council Publicity: Ian Thompson
Cast:
Ashley Walters (Ricky)
Luke Fraser (Curtis)
Clare Perkins (Beverley)
Leon Black (Wisdom)
Sharea-Mounira Samuels (Shea)
Curtis Walker (Leon)

ACTING HARD: WORKING CLASS MASCULINITY IN BRITISH CINEMA

Bullet Boy

Contains strong violence.

SPOILER WARNING The following notes give away some of the plot.

The young man whose aspirations to leave a criminal milieu are fatally trumped by his obligations to a wayward friend – it's one of popular cinema's most potent tragic narratives, a standard of Warner Bros melodrama successfully reworked by Martin Scorsese (*Mean Streets*), Wong Kar Wai (*As Tears Go By*) and Ernest Dickerson (*Juice*) among others. Each version offers the same combination of tempting violence – the easy release of the trigger – and the struggle for self-betterment, and contemporary London's growing gun culture has regrettably made it a suitable setting for this latest take. Documentary maker Saul Dibb's debut feature *Bullet Boy* adheres to the core schema with perfunctory efficiency, charting Hackney youth Ricky's release from jail and immediate reintroduction to the spiral of violence thanks to his inaptly named friend Wisdom. But if we've seen this story a dozen times before, it is devastatingly novel to Ricky's 12-year-old brother Curtis, and the film's success lies in the way it expresses the younger adolescent's perspective on the events overtaking the elder.

There are only glancing references to the causes of Ricky's imprisonment, or of the debt he owes to Wisdom. This clean approach arguably offers a blank narrative slate on to which Ricky's escalating ordeals can be scrawled. The supporting cast helps foster a natural, unforced air that renders much of the action surprisingly affecting, from scenes of good-natured bickering to final leave-takings – notably the heartbreaking hesitancy with which, hours after banishing Ricky, his mother confirms his identity (and her loss). Ashley Walters brings considerable baggage to the lead role: as Asher D he was a key member of So Solid Crew, whose cutting-edge music and violent reputation placed it at the nexus of contemporary street culture, and has himself served time for possession of a firearm (some of it in the very cell seen here).

There is also power in the mock bucolic use of Hackney, with tower-high views of fields pocked with wrecked cars, a leafy canal in which a dead dog floats, a cow used for target practice. This perverted pastoral is the scene of Curtis's youth, and his scenes are rich with dreamy, almost wondrous potential. The film opens on him stowed away in Wisdom's car boot, the camera tight on his flashlit face, framed by his hood and the darkness, as if bearer of some ancient mystery. Similarly Curtis' fetishisation of the gun is somehow more innocent than his brother's, admiring its heft and form rather than its power and meaning until an initially frolicsome game of woodland hide-and-seek, shot in an artfully handhold style reminiscent of *Ratcatcher*, brings that childish fantasy to an end.

Always in uniform but seldom in school, Curtis wants goodness but is unconvinced by its supposed bearers: neither his teacher nor his mother's lay preacher companion – both characterised sympathetically without wishy-

Rio Tison (*Rio*)
 Clark Lawson (*Godfrey*)
 Jadel Vitalis (*Meadow*)
 Sylvester Williams (*Neville*)
 Jamie Winstone (*Natalie*)
 Louise Delamere (*probation officer*)
 Des Hamilton (*school teacher*)
 Chris Callendar (*Ricky's solicitor*)
 Husseyn Clus (*Turkish van driver*)
 Vicky Flavelle, Alan Collins, Corinne Ford
 (*prison officers*)
 Greg Tanner, Martin Heathcote, Chris Turnball
 (*police officers*)
 Michelle John-Douglas (*church singer*)
 Jason Boothe, Jasette Barrett,
 Jewel Charmain Dinnall, Sharon White,
 Patricia Scott, Simeon Daley (*church choir*)
 Trevor McKinley, Noval Smith, Aaron Fagan
 (*church band*)
 Amanda Buchanan, Anabella Ford (*nurses*)
 Waive Martin, Brendan Smith, Nicholas Franklyn,
 Kobina Christie (*Godfrey's crew*)
 Lois Ward (*family liaison officer*)
 Robert Ward (*coroner*)
 Dolly (*Rakim*)
 UK 2004©
 89 mins
 Digital

ACTING HARD: WORKING CLASS MASCULINITY IN BRITISH CINEMA

Scum

Sat 2 Sep 17:50; Fri 8 Sep 18:20

Bullet Boy

Wed 6 Sep 20:50; Sat 9 Sep 20:55

Face

Thu 7 Sep 18:10 (+ intro by season curator Nia
 Childs); Mon 18 Sep 20:45

Beautiful Thing

Sun 10 Sep 18:30; Fri 22 Sep 20:40

Dead Man's Shoes + Q&A with Shane Meadows and Paddy Considine

Tue 12 Sep 18:10

Sweet Sixteen

Wed 13 Sep 18:00; Mon 25 Sep 20:40

Blue Story

Thu 14 Sep 18:15; Sat 23 Sep 20:40

My Beautiful Laundrette

Wed 20 Sep 18:10; Thu 28 Sep 20:30

Muscle + Q&A with director Gerard Johnson, actors Craig Fairbrass, Cavan Clerkin and Polly Maberly

Fri 22 Sep 18:00

Sexy Beast

Sat 23 Sep 18:20; Mon 2 Oct 20:30

Mona Lisa

Sun 24 Sep 18:20; Fri 29 Sep 20:30

Govan Ghost Story

Mon 25 Sep 18:30

The Football Factory + intro by Danny Dyer

Mon 25 Sep 20:45

washy or authoritarian caricature – seems to offer convincing alternatives to Ricky's path. Luke Fraser gives the film's most impressive performance, conveying the delicacy of Curtis' multiple balancing acts with emotional force but no demand for sympathy: his love for Ricky borders on worship but is countered by the premium on machismo he increasingly apprehends as a challenge to both self-expression and self-preserving prudence. 'I'd rather be a mummy's boy than a crack-head' runs his robust response to peer pressure from his mate Rio, although it's unclear how long he can hold out. It's a measure of the film's sad sincerity that even as it ends with Curtis' rejection of violence, his only binding tie seems to be a friendship already freighted with the kind of twisted obligation that does for his brother.

Ben Walters, *Sight and Sound*, April 2005

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